

Good afternoon members of the Environment Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

My name is Joseph Wasserman and I am a community organizer from Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice or CCEJ. I am here to testify in support of SB 316 An Act Requiring labeling of all food and beverage packaging that contains Bisphenol A. Bisphenol A or BPA is a known endocrine disrupter. Over 200 studies have found BPA exposure, even at very low doses, to be linked with prostate and breast cancer, obesity, attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity disorder, lowered sperm count and early onset of puberty. The Center for Disease Control informs us that 93% of Americans have detectable levels of BPA in their bodies.

The low-income communities and Communities of Color that CCEJ advocates for depend more upon canned food that contain BPA in the metal containers. There is strong evidence that BPA seeps into the food from the cans.

The public health concerns involved with BPA is an example of why we need a comprehensive chemical policy that will identify the toxic chemicals of high concern and suggest safer alternatives. BPA is only one example of a chemical we are exposed to on a regular basis that poses serious public health dangers. There are thousands of chemicals that are being used that are in fact untested due to the inadequacy of existing federal laws. The Toxic Substances Control Act, passed by Congress in 1976, gives the EPA very limited authority to require the testing of chemicals. Of the approximately 80,000 chemicals in commerce since 1976, EPA has only required testing of a few hundred. Since our federal system for protecting the public health from toxic chemicals is broken, states like Connecticut need to take the lead, both in banning BPA and in the area of comprehensive chemical reform.

Please pass SB 316 to label BPA in food and beverage packaging and also support chemical reform as a long term solution to the toxic chemical problem.